1

2          What is claimed is:

3

4          1.    A method for providing a switch user functionality in a server-agent

5    environment in an information technological (IT) network in which at least one

6    agent runs on a node of the IT network, comprising:

7          generating a switch user (SU) certificate using public-key cryptography

8    upon receiving a request to switch from a user account presently used on the

9    node to another user account;

10         sending the SU certificate to the agent;

11         checking the correctness of the SU certificate;

12         performing the requested switch to the other user account provided that

13   the SU certificate is correct.

14

15         2.    The method of claim 1, wherein the server-agent environment

16   comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is management

17   agent running on a managed node.

18

19         3.    The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate is generated by a

20   designated server.

21

22         4.    The method of claim 1, wherein the agent forwards the received SU

23   certificate to a domain controller which checks the correctness of the SU

24   certificate and allows the agent to perform the requested switch user.

25

26         5.    The method of claim 1, wherein a private and public key pair is

27   available before the method begins.

28

29         6.    The method of claim 5, wherein the public key is made public within

1  the network or within a domain of the network in which the correctness of the

2  SU certificate is checked.

3

4      7.    The method of claim 5, wherein the generation of the SU certificate

5  comprises signing an SU document with the private key and wherein the

6  checking of the SU certificate comprises verifying the signature with the public

7  key.

8

9      8.    The method of claim 1, wherein the step of checking the correctness

10  of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU certificate originates from a

11  designated server and has not been modified.

12

13     9.    The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate contains no

14  password relating to the account to which the switch is to be performed.

15

16     10. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises the

17  account name to which the account is to be switched and an identification of

18  the node for which the switch is to be performed.

19

20     11. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises a time

21  stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

22

23     12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of checking comprises

24  verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been used before, by

25  means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

26

27     13. A computer program product including program code for providing a

28  switch user functionality in a server-agent environment in an information

29  technological (IT) network in which at least one agent runs on a node of the IT

1  network, said program code for:

2  generating a switch user (SU) certificate using public-key cryptography

3  upon receipt of a request to switch from a user account presently used on the

4  agent to another user account;

5  sending the SU certificate to the agent;

6  checking the correctness of the SU certificate;

7  performing the requested switch to the other user account provided that

8  the SU certificate is correct.

9

10  14   The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the server-agent

11  environment comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is

12  management agent running on a managed node.

13

14  15.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate

15  is generated by a designated server.

16

17  16.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the agent

18  forwards the received SU certificate to a domain controller which checks the

19  correctness of the SU certificate and allows the agent to perform the requested

20  switch user.

21

22  17.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein a private and

23  public key pair is generated before an SU certificate is generated for the first

24  time.

25

26  18.  The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the public key is

27  made public within the network or within a domain of the network in which the

28  correctness of the SU certificate is checked.

29

1    19.  The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the generation of

2    the SU certificate comprises signing an SU document with the private key and

3    wherein the checking of the SU certificate comprises verifying the signature with

4    the public key.

5

6    20.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the step of

7    checking the correctness of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU

8    certificate originates from a designated server and has not been modified.

9

10   21.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate

11   contains no password relating to the account to which the switch is to be

12   performed.

13

14   22.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate

15   comprises the account name to which the account is to be switched and an

16   identification of the node for which the switch is to be performed.

17

18   23.  The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate

19   comprises a time stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

20

21   24.  The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the step of

22   checking comprises verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been

23   used before, by means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

24

25   25.  A system for managing objects in an information technological (IT)

26   network having a network management server and at least one management

27   agent which runs on a managed node of the IT network, said system provides a

28   switch user functionality and comprises:

29          an  SU  certificate  generation  component  which  uses  public-key

1   cryptography;

2        an SU certificate sending component which sends the certificate to the

3   agent;

4        an SU certificate checking component;

5        a user account switching component performing the requested switch

6   provided that the SU certificate is correct.

7

8        26. The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate generation

9   component is a part of the management server.

10

11        27. The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate checking

12   component is a part of a domain controller.

13

14        28. The system of claim 25, further comprising a public key publication

15   component.

16

17        29. The system of claim 28, wherein the SU certificate generation

18   component comprises an digital-signature component which signs an SU

19   document with a private key corresponding to the public key and wherein the

20   SU certificate checking component comprises a signature verification

21   component.

22